

MONUMENT TO CAPTAIN NATHAN HALE.

[To accompany joint resolution H. R. No. 12.]

MAY 25, 1842.

Mr. BROCKWAY, from the Select Committee to which the subject had been referred, submitted the following

REPORT:

The Select Committee to which was referred the memorial of citizens of Coventry and Hebron, in the State of Connecticut, praying that a monument may be erected to the memory of Captain Nathan Hale, beg leave to report :

That the memorial presents, for the consideration of Congress, the meritorious services and melancholy death of Nathan Hale. This gallant young officer and youthful patriot had but just graduated at Yale College, and closed his academic course with high reputation for genius and scholarship, when the war of the Revolution commenced. Patriotic from principle, and enthusiastic in the cause of his country, he was impelled by his ardent love of liberty to take up arms in its defence. The news of the battle of Lexington, where the first American blood was spilled in our struggle for independence, roused his martial spirit, and summoned him from home and the pursuits of peace to the field. He immediately received a lieutenant's commission in the continental army, joined the American forces at Boston in 1775, and for his good conduct and military tact and skill was promoted to the rank of captain before his arrival at twenty-one years of age.

In 1776 he accompanied the American army to New York, and was attached to the regiment commanded by Colonel Knowlton, of the Connecticut line, who, in September of the same year, fell gallantly fighting at its head at the battle of Harlem Heights. Captain Hale's company was fortunately among those which escaped capture in the disastrous battle on Long Island, and the subsequent masterly retreat on the morning of the 30th of August, 1776. While the British troops were in the possession of the island, and from the high grounds of Brooklyn could overlook and command the Americans, drawn together under Washington, in the city of New York, it became a matter of great moment to ascertain their precise situation, number, and plan for ulterior operation. The Commander-in-chief proposed to Colonel Knowlton the selection of the person to whom this delicate and dangerous trust should be confided. Calling together the officers of his regiment, he made known to them the wishes of their General, pointed out the perils as well as the importance of the undertaking, and left them free to accept or refuse the responsible charge. It was a

business in which great risk was to be encountered, and few laurels won; and yet young Hale, feeling the urgency of the occasion, and moved by a high and chivalrous sense of duty, in spite of the remonstrances of friends, volunteered his services, and perilled his life in the hazardous enterprise. Washington was well pleased to commit to one of such valor, discretion, and military knowledge, a work of such vital consequence to his future movements, and perhaps the salvation of his whole army.

In pursuance of a plan previously adopted, Captain Hale passed over to Long Island in disguise, visited the British encampment, procured the desired information of the enemy's contemplated operations and numbers, and had proceeded to the ferry which connects the island with the city, on his return, when he was arrested as a spy, taken before the commander, and, without form of trial, ordered to be *hung next morning*. The order was most cruelly and barbarously executed. The prisoner was delivered over to a refugee, who showed him no mercy nor pity, denied him the attendance of a clergyman and the use of a Bible, and destroyed his letters to his mother and friends. He died like a hero, with the memorable words upon his lips: "*I only regret I have but one life to lose for my country.*" Thus perished, alone and unfriended, amid the taunts and reproaches of refugees and tories, this lamented and patriotic officer. Like Andre, he was young, highly cultivated in mind and polished in manners, and gave promise of great achievement in after life. Like him, too, he lost his life in a daring adventure for his country's good; but the parallel ends here. Andre was promised, in the event of success, magnificent reward and elevated promotion. Hale's attempt was from the impulse of his own generous and noble nature, to render his countrymen essential aid in their fearful struggle, at a fearful crisis. Andre has been held in grateful remembrance by those for whom he laid down his life—has been celebrated in story and song, and his remains have been transported across the waters, and deposited with England's illustrious dead in Westminster Abbey. The committee can find no trace of any memorial erected, by a grateful country, to the virtues, patriotism, and mournful fate of Nathan Hale.

Deeming it, therefore, but an act of justice that some tribute should be paid to the memory of one who so nobly sacrificed himself for the independence of the nation, they recommend the passage of the accompanying joint resolution, by which an appropriation is granted for a monument to be placed in the cemetery of the place of his nativity, in Coventry, (Conn.,) among his fathers' sepulchres.